

Barry Carol  
32 Idlewild Lane  
Aberdeen, NJ 07747

July 17, 2014

RECEIVED

JUL 21 2014

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
EXECUTIVE BUREAU

Attorney General – Partners Deal  
Office of the Attorney General  
One Ashbuton Place – 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Attorney General Coakley:

I would like to offer a comment on the Attorney General – Partners Health System proposed agreement.

First, I think the proposed deal does not do enough to mitigate the significant price premium paid to the Partners Health System facilities compared to competing hospital systems for similar work and comparable outcomes. These price premiums are paid because of PHS' dominant local and regional market power. The resulting higher healthcare costs and health insurance premiums make it more difficult for Massachusetts employers to raise wages as much as they might otherwise.

To mitigate this problem, I think there needs to be full price transparency from all providers and all payers. Confidentiality agreements that currently preclude disclosure of actual contract reimbursement rates need to be eliminated so both patients and referring primary care doctors can more easily determine the cost of care before services are rendered and compare prices charged by all providers in the market. We want as much care as possible to be delivered by the most cost-effective high quality providers and we need full price transparency to facilitate this.

I also think insurers should be able to contract with either Massachusetts General Hospital or Brigham & Women's instead of having to either accept both hospitals in their network or neither.

To the extent that patients like to go to higher cost hospitals that offer better amenities even if they don't affect medical outcomes, insurers need to be able to charge insured members enough more to go to those facilities to get their attention. Tiered insurance networks should be encouraged.

Healthcare in Massachusetts is the most expensive in the country, I believe. Since the 2006 reforms signed by then Governor Mitt Romney were largely a model for developing the

Affordable Care Act, healthcare developments in Massachusetts are closely followed at the federal level. I think the proposed deal with PHS short changes the people of Massachusetts and is way too favorable for PHS.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry Carol". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Barry Carol